



Doctor of Medicine (MD)



MD application guide

(for Cambridge University Health Partners (CUHP) employees)



Academic Year 2023-24

The Cambridge MD

The Science Requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed research concerns the theory and/or the practice of medicine. • There are at least 2 years ring-fenced research time. • There is a clearly thought through, and well-structured project proposal which should include: hypothesis, aims, detailed research plan (including statistical analyses), methods and conclusions. • There is current ethics approval in place for the proposed project, if required. • If relevant, there is lab space available for the research with bench fees and consumables covered. 	
And	
The Supervisor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A senior clinician or clinical academic, eligible to supervise a higher degree, has confirmed he or she will supervise the project, provide regular supervision or progress reports, and review the thesis prior to submission. 	
And	
Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant should provide evidence that the proposed MD project is fully funded for the duration of the research, including financial maintenance for the candidate. 	
And now apply for	
either	or
Will you be conducting the proposed MD project <u>within</u> and be employed by either the University of Cambridge or a CUHP Institution?	Do you have a primary degree from the University of Cambridge and will you be conducting the proposed MD project <u>outside</u> the University of Cambridge or a CUHP Institution?
 <u>MD (CUHP)</u>	 <u>MD by Special Regulations</u>

Before applying for the MD (CUHP)

Eligibility: please ensure that you are eligible to apply for the MD.

The essential academic/professional requirements for the MD are:

- a primary degree of the University of Cambridge (e.g. BA, MB Bchir, MPhil, PhD)
or
- an appropriate contract of employment within a member institution of Cambridge University Health Partners (i.e. University of Cambridge, Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (Addenbrooke's and the Rosie Hospitals), Royal Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust)
and also
- a medical degree giving entitlement to provisional or full registration with the General Medical Council

Note: at least 4 years must have elapsed since being awarded your medical degree (MB BChir, MBBS, MB ChirB, etc.) before you may submit a thesis for the MD degree.

Contract of employment: your CUHP contract must allow at least two years' full-time research (or part-time equivalent). In addition, you must be at ST1 grade or above.

Your supervisor: You should identify a University of Cambridge Principal Supervisor who is willing to supervise your research throughout the duration of the programme before you apply. He/she should:

- hold a fixed contract with the University of Cambridge (e.g. as a Clinical Lecturer, Associate Lecturer, etc.) and thereby be a member of a University Department;
- be experienced in supervising graduate research students to doctoral level (PhD, MD);
- understand the University's requirements concerning termly progress reporting using the CamSIS system (and therefore have an @cam email address and a Raven password).

Your application to the University of Cambridge

If you are working in Cambridge within a member institution of Cambridge University Health Partners, you must apply online as a graduate student using the Application Portal.

[MD \(Doctor of Medicine\) | Postgraduate Admissions \(cam.ac.uk\)](#)

The Course fee is £9,387 payable over the first two years of the course.

In addition to completing the application you will be asked to upload the following documents:

- 2 academic references
- A detailed research proposal (about 8–10 pages)
- Copy of the transcript of your medical degree (if easily available)
- Details of your CUHP employment contract (duration, level, research time allocation, etc.)
- A brief CV
- A letter of support from your supervisor, including confirmation that you have been interviewed.

You may apply to start at three points in the year: April (Easter Term), October (Michaelmas Term) and January (Lent Term).

The closing dates for each of these can be found at

[MD \(Doctor of Medicine\) | Postgraduate Admissions \(cam.ac.uk\)](#)

And further information on the application process is available here:

<https://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/>

Application timeline: the MD Committee meets monthly during the academic year and it is very unlikely that a decision will be reached at a single meeting. Applications are usually considered by the Committee on several occasions. MD research proposals often raise questions and are sent for expert review outside the Committee (see below). This process will take a number of months. Applications should therefore be submitted as far in advance of the preferred admission term as possible. Applications where insufficient attention has been paid to the information and advice in the following sections, will take several months before a decision is reached. If necessary your term of admission will be put back to the following term, which could be in the next academic year.

MD research proposal

The description of your work should contain sufficient information to enable the MD Committee, or experts approached by the Committee, to assess the suitability of the work for an MD thesis. As a general guide, sufficient information can usually be provided in 2,500–3,500 words (excluding references), though this will depend on the nature of the project and how far you have progressed with it (e.g. whether you have any results to report). A poorly constructed proposal will delay the application process and may result in your application being rejected.

Please include, where relevant, the following:

- (i) the significance and purpose of the proposed work
- (ii) a clear statement of the hypothesis/research question(s) being tested
- (iii) a clear description and explanation of the research techniques, materials and statistical analyses used (with reference to previously published methods and brief description of any new methods)
- (iv) the number of experiments to be undertaken or sample size (including controls), with power calculations
- (v) preliminary interpretation of any results already obtained
- (vi) need for ethical approvals as appropriate
- (vii) details of how the work will be financed
- (viii) the University or CUHP department/unit where the work is to be carried out
- (ix) how much of the work will be carried out personally and how much with the help of others (specify the nature of any help); and how much of the work may already have been completed and what still remains to be done
- (x) name of your proposed Principal Supervisor and/or other research collaborators.
- (xi) Letter of support from supervisor, including the fact that the candidate has been interviewed must be included.

Common pitfalls

Your proposal will be reviewed first by the MD Committee and then, if appropriate, by experts in your field. If your proposal fails to meet the basic standard of being suitable for external peer review, it will be rejected by the Committee. We therefore draw your attention to the following common mistakes:

- **unrealistic aims** – MD research projects are often part of a larger ongoing research programme; the MD thesis must be a stand-alone piece of work undertaken by the applicant with aims that are feasible within a framework of 2–3 years' full-time research (or part-time equivalent)
- **opaque experimental questions**
- **lack of hypotheses**
- **missing links between experimental design and hypotheses**
- **lack of clarity about your own involvement at each stage of the project** – the MD Committee will seek assurance that you have had input into the study design and will be undertaking the literature searches, experimental work and analysis yourself. You must be very clear about those areas of the work where you rely on the assistance of others.
- **failing to obtain adequate statistical advice**

Ethical considerations

The design and conduct of research work proposed for the MD degree must conform to high standards of medical ethics. It is advisable to seek the approval of a local ethical Committee where appropriate. We draw candidates' attention to the code of ethics of the World Medical Association (Declaration of Helsinki), and the Committee reserves the right to make a judgement on the ethical propriety of studies.

What happens next?

Your application will go first to the MD Committee, which will assess the suitability of your work for the MD. The Committee may seek the advice of experts external to the Committee if required, whose comments may be sent back to you for a response (e.g. requesting clarification about the methods, sample size, the extent of your role, etc. – but see 'Common pitfalls' above). If the Committee is happy with your responses to questions about your proposal, it will then make a recommendation to the Faculty Degree Committee, and if you have been successful, it will recommend that you are made an offer of a place by the Postgraduate Admissions Office. You will be able to track the progress of your application on CamSIS via the Application Portal.

Once you receive your formal offer of a place, your college place will be confirmed and you will be asked to meet your financial undertaking (course cost plus college fee). You can then take up your place and you will become a registered student at the University of Cambridge.

Information on the admissions process is here

<https://www.postgraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/application-process/applicant-portal-and-self-service-account>

How soon can I submit my thesis?

The MD is a part-time course over 6 years. You may submit your thesis at the end of your second year as a registered student of the University.

Examination

Examination is by thesis, which must be defended at a viva (the Act) at a location in Cambridge.

The MD Committee

Chaired by Professor Margaret Ashcroft with Dr Chris Allen as the Regius's Assessor (Academic Secretary), the MD Committee comprises 16 members of the Faculty of Clinical Medicine and University and NHS departments, all of whom are leaders in their field of research and practicing clinicians.

The Postgraduate Education and Clinical Academic Training Section

PECATS provides administrative support for the MD degree.

Secretary to the MD Committee is Ms Elizabeth McIntyre and Ms Charlotte Stafferton (Administrative support).

md-admin@medschl.cam.ac.uk

Data Protection – How we use your personal information (for applicants)

<https://www.information-compliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/data-protection/applicant-data>

TO NOTE:

Application Deadlines

Programme deadlines are set to enable plenty of time for application review.

Programme Term Start	Programme Application Deadline
Lent Term 2024	25 April 2023
Easter Term 2024	03 October 2023
Michaelmas Term 2023	31 January 2023

Change of Course

Once accepted into the MD (CUHP) programme it is not permitted to transfer from an MD to a PhD. You would have to withdraw from the MD and submit a new application for a PhD.